Encode Justice DMV Chapter
SB0979 Testimony
Nikhita Bhatt, Emilie Garrabrant

As a group of high school and college students, we strongly support the passage of Senate Bill 979, which aims to establish guidelines and regulations for the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in the classroom. We have witnessed firsthand the impact of AI technology in our educational institutions, and we believe that this bill is crucial in ensuring its safe and effective implementation.

The absence of standardized policies and guidelines surrounding AI use in our classrooms has resulted in a lack of guidance for both educators and students. This has left us feeling unprepared for the future that lies ahead, where AI technology is becoming increasingly prevalent. We firmly believe that AI is not just a passing trend, but a transformative force that will shape the way we live and work.

By enacting Senate Bill 979, we can pave the way for a more systematic and responsible integration of AI in education. The bill will require the State Department of Education to collaborate with the AI Subcabinet of the Governor's Executive Council to develop and update guidelines, standards, and best practices for county boards of education. This collaborative effort will ensure that AI is used in a safe, responsible, and ethical manner, placing students and teachers at the center of educational technology. The bill also discusses using evidence-based approaches and stakeholder collaboration in order to create these policies, which demonstrates a commitment to utilizing the most effective and well-informed practices in the development of AI guidelines for education. This evidence-based approach will ensure that the policies put forth are grounded in research and are tailored to meet the unique needs of our students and educators.

This bill includes provisions to prevent discrimination and protect privacy in the context of AI system implementation. It ensures fair treatment for students and faculty by mitigating biases and promoting equal opportunity. The bill also establishes guidelines to safeguard private information, such as phone numbers and browsing history, ensuring that data is handled responsibly and with consent. These provisions prioritize fairness, non-discrimination, and privacy, creating an inclusive and secure environment for all.

Furthermore, the bill calls for the development of strategies to assist county boards and superintendents in implementing these best practices. This support will foster a consistent and effective approach to AI integration across the state, benefiting students and educators alike. It is essential that we equip our educators with the necessary tools and knowledge to navigate this rapidly evolving technological landscape.

In conclusion, Senate Bill 979 is a crucial step toward ensuring the safe and responsible use of AI in our classrooms. As students, we urge you to support this bill and pave the way for a future where AI technology is seamlessly integrated into our education system. Together, let us embrace the transformative power of AI and empower our students to thrive in the digital age.